THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS

By President ROBERT M. HUTCHINS

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

The task which Mr. Harper and his associates set themselves fifty years ago was that of organizing a university. To them a university was, like the German university of that time, an institution dominated by the spirit of inquiry. The characteristic activity of its professors was research.

The task involved selecting men qualified for research, giving them facilities for it, assembling students who could take part in it, and erecting that protection of academic freedom about it which, in the bad old imperial days, guaranteed the independence of the teaching and investigations of the German professor.

The University of Chicago was a university the day it opened. We are now so used to universities that we are apt to think that this achievement, though doubtless unusual, was not very remarkable. We are apt to think that all it required was money and that anybody could have done it if he had had the money that was available to the organizers of the University of Chicago.

But the money was not available. Mr. Rockefeller’s original pledge was for $600,000, and it was conditional on the raising of $400,000 more. We later became so used to great gifts for universities that we now suppose that all the participants, including Mr. Rockefeller, must have expected him to give the enormous sum of $35,000,000 which he did give by 1910. But